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THE BIRDS OF HOLYOKE
[MASS.].

BY
E. S. WATERS.



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The Birds of Holyoke
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

THEIR HABITS, IMPORTANCE
AND CHARACTERISTICS

By EDWARD S. WATERS

Read before the
Holyoke Horticultural Society

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E. J. Waters

BIRDS.

My paper to-night treats of the birds of our vicinity. Some of you may ask, what has this to do with horticulture, and why should this paper be read to a horticultural society? My answer is, that birds have much to do with the success of gardening, and for the further reason that persons fond of flowers are generally interested in the birds that they see and hear.

Flint estimates four varieties of insects to each plant in Massachusetts. Curtis says that one night moth can, in twelve months, produce sixteen millions of caterpillars. In a single tree eighty thousand bark-boring beetles have been found. In Devonshire, Eng, the turnip beetle has caused, in one season, a loss of half a million dollars in turnips. In France, during two years, a single florist lost one

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hundred thousand rosebushes from the larvæ of the cockchafer. In Germany, one million and a half trees were killed in a few years by a bark-boring beetle. Here in our own state large appropriations are called for to destroy the eggs of the Gypsy moth.

In Prussia, at one time, the farmers were made liable to a capitation tax of twelve heads of sparrows a year, but the result of this policy, at the end of two years, proved so harmful to the wheat that the tax was removed and sparrows saved from extermination.

In 1820, there was an old-fashioned shooting match in North Bridgewater, in this state, and birds were killed in such abundance that cartloads were used for fertilizers. Soon the herbage began to show signs of injury; tufts of withered grass appeared, and the fields and pastures were well-nigh ruined.

The Marsh Hawk destroys large numbers of field mice and beetles. The

Cuckoos eat chiefly the hairy caterpillar, the larvæ of the apple-tree moth. The Woodpeckers hunt for the larvæ of beetles, which live in the trunks of the trees. Chimney Swallows feed largely on small-winged insects, and the Night Hawk eats thousands of mosquitoes. The Vireos live wholly on insects, and the Finches and the Sparrows, though the adults live on seeds, feed their young with soft larvæ.

Watch the Robin as he hops over our garden beds, or our lawns. He stands in a listening attitude, perks his head knowingly to one side and the other, and in an instant more is pulling up an earthworm or a fine fat cutworm. He steals our strawberries and poaches our ripest cherries; but, forgive him for that, for he pays well for the fruit that he takes.

Bradley says that a pair of Sparrows will destroy more than three thousand caterpillars a week. Wilson declares that a Blackbird will destroy fifty grubs a day, and Flagg has counted seventeen cater-

pillars eaten by a Baltimore Oriole in a minute.

The Crow pulls up some corn, but think of the thousand noxious grubs and insects that he destroys. The Kingbird eats honeybees, but for every bee that he slays he makes way with a thousand bugs. The Cedar bird works sad havoc amidst our ripe cherries, but during the autumn he devours hordes of noxious insects. Dr. Trimble states that the stomach of one Cedar bird, or Cherry bird, as he is sometimes called, contained thirty-six canker worms.

The Purple Finch, or Linnet, destroys our peach buds in early spring; the Goldfinch eats the gardener's seeds, and yet we cannot spare them. The Bobolink is exceedingly destructive in the rice fields of the Carolinas, but we need it here. Edward A. Samuels says that he saw a pair of Robins destroy twenty-four and twenty-seven cutworms respectively, in one hour; and on another occasion

twenty-six and thirty. At another time a pair of robins carried to their young forty cutworms and caterpillars in sixty minutes. A pair of robins with four young will eat two hundred and fifty worms a day.

Are not these facts strong arguments in favor of my position? Are not birds a necessity to horticulture? Ought we not do all that we can to preserve them and induce them to nest about our grounds? The craze for stuffed birds and bright feathers to adorn the hats of the ladies, has nearly extirpated some of our choicest songsters of the groves. Now that the fashion has changed, there will be a chance for the birds to increase and multiply. Another fad has done serious injury. I refer to the efforts of boys to gather together a collection of eggs by robbing the nests of our little visitors. The eggs are prized for awhile, but are soon broken and wasted.

Let me strengthen my case by some

lines from Longfellow, in his "Birds of Killingworth."

"The robin and the bluebird piping loud,
Filled all the blossoming orchards with their
glee,

The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud
Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be ;
And hungry crows, assembled in a crowd.

Clamored their piteous prayer incessantly ;
Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and said,
'Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread.'

"The thrush that carols at the dawn of day
From the green steeples of the piny wood,
The oriole in the elm ; the noisy jay
Jargoning like a foreigner at his food ;
The bluebird, balanced on some topmost spray,
Flooding with melody the neighborhood,
Linnet and meadow lark, and all the throng
That dwell in nests and have the gift of song.

"You slay them all ; and wherefore ? For the gain
Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,
Or rye, or barley, or some other grain
Scratched up at random by industrious feet ;
Searching for worm or weevil after rain,
Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet
As are the songs these uninvited guests
Sing at their feast, with comfortable breasts.

"Do you never think what wondrous beings
these?

Do you never think who made them, and who
taught

The dialect they speak, where melodies
Alone are the interpreters of thought?

Whose household words are songs in many keys
Sweeter than instruments of man e'er taught.

Whose habitations in the tree tops even
Are half-way houses on the road to heaven.

"Think of your woods and orchards without
birds,

Of empty nests that cling to bough and beams,
As in an idiot's brain remembered words

Hang empty mid the cobwebs of his dreams.

Will bleat of flocks, or bellowing of herds,

Make up for the lost music, when your teams
Drag home the stingy harvest, and no more
The feathered gleaners follow to your door?

"You call them thieves and pillagers'; but know

They are the winged wardens of your farms;
Who from the cornfield drive the insidious foe,
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms.

Even the blackest of them all, the crow,

Renders good service as your man of arms,
'Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,
And crying havoc on the slug and snail."

The class Aves (the Latin name for birds) is generally divided by ornithologists among the following orders: Accipitres, or birds of prey; Insessores, the perchers; Scansores, the climbers; Gallinæ, the scratchers; Natatores, the Swimmers; and Grallæ, the waders.

We can, for our convenience, describe them as birds of the city, birds of the garden and orchard, birds of the pastures and woods, and birds of the swamps and the ponds.

Hubert L. Clark, in his list of birds of Amherst and vicinity, notices one hundred and seventy-seven species, either residents or visitors. One hundred and seven of these are birds of regular and certain appearances, thirty-three of irregular and uncertain appearance, and thirty-seven birds extremely rare or accidental in the county. Many of the birds embraced among the first-named birds in the list we can easily discover if we keep our eyes and our ears open when we walk

or ride. Some, however, are very small, and some very shy, keeping in the densest foliage in the thickets, or in the top foliage of the trees. Some of them are not only small and shy, but they are also of such dull and subdued colors that they are seen with difficulty, even when you know where they are.

Who does not feel a thrill of pleasure when first we hear the sweet note of the Song Sparrow after a long and dreary winter? Other birds visit us before this little songster, but this is the true harbinger of spring. We know now that the reign of frost and snow is nearly over, and that the glory of the spring and the promise of rich summer will soon be with us. What though we may yet have a few days more of damp snows, chilly frosts, and muddy roads: the little stranger sings through all the alterations of snow and sleet, of fog and rain, and of sunshine and clouds, and he exhorts us to wait hopefully for the better days that are

coming. The Song Sparrow may be here by the middle of March, but generally we must look for him later in the month. It remains with us all summer, leaving generally in November, and his song ceases not so long as he remains with us. It is not common within the city gardens, but it is abundant in the suburbs. It nests on the ground or in low bushes, and raises two or even three broods in a season, laying from three to six eggs, which are bluish gray in color, speckled with brown.

The Bluebird oftentimes comes earlier than the Sparrow, and is more familiar in the city streets. His amorous, vivacious warble we all know and love. It nests in bird houses or in holes in trees, raises two or three broods, and lays from four to seven eggs.

The Phœbe is also an early visitor. You will often hear him as you walk in the early spring. It generally nests under rocks or small bridges or culverts, raises

two or three broods in a season, and lays from three to six eggs.

Now comes our Robin, or Migratory Thrush, which is his proper name. Our early English settlers named him the Robin simply on account of his red breast, but he has very little resemblance to the Robin Redbreast, who was so kind to the Babes in the Wood, who married Jenny Wren, and was afterwards murdered by the Sparrow, with his bow and arrow. The English Robin is but little larger than our Bluebird, which also has a red breast; and in fact, has more resemblance to the robin of old story than has our thrush. The Robin nests in our trees and grape arbors, raises two to three broods, and delights to sing to us from chimney top and vanes. It is one of our most familiar birds.

In the early spring we see the following birds, which are winter residents. The Crow we have always with us. His croak, or his caw, is heard during every

month. In winter its croak has a lonesome sound, and his appearance, so dark and gloomy, has not an exhilarating effect; but when the snow has melted and the little brooks are in full run, its more mellow caw chimes with the song of the Sparrow and the warble of the Bluebird, and its love notes are almost musical.

The little Chickadee we shall see if we walk in the woods at the base of Mt. Tom. It spends the winter with us, and its cry of "chickadee, dee, dee" is pleasant to our ears. It is a bold little bird, and seems to have but little fear of man. Years ago I spent a winter in the extensive pine forests of Northern Wisconsin, camping out in the deep snows of that section, making my camps of hemlock and fir boughs. Wherever my camp was fixed, there the Chickadee would be sure to find me, and I could usually lure him to my side by offering him gifts of fat meat. Finally he would become so tame that he would frequently light on my

hand to feast on the luscious morsel I offered him. It's true name is the Black-capped Titmouse. It is about five inches long, its back of an obscure ash color, its breast whitish, its crown and throat black. Besides its common note of chickadee, dee, dee, it has another, which resembles the note of the Phoebe, but drawled out sad and plaintive.

Where you find the Chickadee, there also seek for the Brown Creeper, and you may find it zigzagging around the tree trunks, running head up or head down, it seems to make no difference which. It is a pleasant singer, but is seldom seen in the summer. It's place then is taken by another similar bird, named the Black and White Creeper, which has no song, but a simple call to its mate, which resembles the chirp of a grasshopper.

There, also, see the Blue Jay, the fop or dandy of our woods. Watch him pegging away at an acorn that he has stuck in a knothole, or perhaps a crotch in a

limb of a tree. He is very handsome with his crest uplifted, with a black collar around his throat, and with his bright, blue wings and tail; but when he opens his mouth, like many another dandy, the voice that issues from his throat convinces us that he is all show. Its ordinary song is like unto the creaking of an ungreased wheelbarrow. He is somewhat of a mocker, and he often drives to shelter the timid songsters by a cry which much resembles the shriek of the Sparrow Hawk. Its love call is somewhat softer, but it can hardly be termed musical. He is voracious, eating eggs and the young of other birds.

The Tree Sparrow, the Snow Bird, the Shrike, the White-bellied Nuthatch, and the Golden-crowned Kinglet, are all winter residents here, and you may also see in the winter the Goldfinch, the Cross-bills, and the lesser Redpoll.

The Tree Sparrow is somewhat longer

and slimmer than most of the sparrows, its note a pleasant chirp.

The Shrike, or Butcherbird, is said to be a fine singer, but though I have seen many of them, I never yet have heard a note from one. It kills the small birds and larger insects, and impales their bodies on thorns and pointed limbs, where it preserves them until it can eat them at its leisure. It appears larger than the robin, but much of its apparent size is due to the arrangement of its feathers, which are very fluffy.

The White-bellied Nuthatch runs up and down and around the tree limbs. It has a peculiarly sharp trumpet cry of hank.

I have mentioned the song and the tree sparrows, but we have several others besides these. We have the English, the Field, the Fox-colored, the Savannah, the Swamp, the White-crowned, the White-throated, and the Chipping Sparrows.

The English Sparrow, unfortunately, is not now a stranger to us. He is a type of

some of our politicians, noisy, quarrelsome, of foreign importation, and acts as though the natives have no rights that he is bound to respect. He picks to pieces our flower buds, he destroys our flowers, he is a nuisance to our houses, and yet he is of some use. He does rarely destroy some noxious insects and worms, but he drives from our grounds the native birds who are more pleasant to sight and hearing, and who would kill more insects. I must confess that I do like to hear his noisy chirp in the winter, but he is detestable at all other times.

The Field Sparrow resembles the common Chipping Sparrow, but can be easily distinguished from the last by the fact that it shows two white bars in its tail as it flies. It is often known as the Vesper bird, for the reason that it often sings during the twilight hours, its song being very sweet and plaintive.

The Fox-colored Sparrow is the largest of our sparrows, and can be known from

its size and its bright, foxy-red color. It is a beautiful singer. I have seen it here in the spring, but have never heard a note from it here. In Illinois, however, I have heard its song, and think its song more musical, and with more variations, than that of any other sparrow.

The Savannah Sparrow is not common here, and it is so shy and retiring in its habit that we seldom see it. Its notes are peculiar and not very musical. It can be known from the others by the yellow edge to its wings.

The Swamp Sparrow you will seldom see. It is here, but only to be found in thick, brushy swamps. Its note is pleasing, and you may hear it in May if you are walking through the woods and swamps back of Plainville.

The White-crowned Sparrow is among the largest of this species, but it is rarely seen here.

The White-throated Sparrow is also large for its species. It visits us in the

spring and autumn. I sometimes hear in the city its sweet notes; but to hear them in perfection you must go further north, where he seems to sing constantly. It is there called the Ben Peabody bird, as his notes are Ben Beabody, peabody; peabody repeated in a musical and plaintive note. The poet describes him thus:

"Hark : 'Tis our northern nightingale that sings
In far-off leafy cloisters, dark and cool ;
Flinging his flute notes bounding from the skies.
Thou wild musician of the northern streams,
Most tuneful minstrel of the forest choirs,
Bird of all grace, and harmony of soul.
Unseen, we hail thee for thy blissful voice.

" Deep in the shade, we lie and listen long,
Learn from such notes, fresh hints of praise,
That upward swelling from the graceful tribe
Circles the hills with melodies of joy."

The Chipping Sparrow, or Chippie, you all know, as it is here in large numbers. It has no long-sustained song, but its chirp is rather musical. It is often called the Hair bird, for the reason that it lines

its nest with horsehair gathered from the roads and pastures.

I must not forget to mention as common spring birds the Blackbirds. They come early and assemble in flocks on the bare branches of the trees. The concert they give us can hardly be called sweet, but yet their mingled notes are pleasant, coming as they do before most of our sweet-voiced choristers make their debut. The blackbirds seen here are the Cow, the Crow, the Red-winged, and the Rusty Blackbirds.

The Cow bird is not handsome, nor are its notes pleasing. You will often see a small flock feeding among the cows in the pasture, and sometimes one or more upon the back of a cow. He must be considered a type of some of our so-called statesmen, who look to it that the members of their family are fed at the public crib, for the Cow bird, like the European Cuckoo, lays its eggs in the nest of other birds, and its progeny are supported at the ex-

pense of others ; its young being larger than the fledglings of the birds in whose nests the eggs are laid, in the struggle for existence they starve the proper occupants, or crowd them from their beds.

The Crow Blackbird you may easily know because it is so much larger than the other blackbirds. Its color is jet black, with iridescent blue and green on its head and shoulders

The Red-winged Blackbird is the handsomest of its kind, the male bird having a bright scarlet spot on his wing, which is very conspicuous when he flies.

The Rusty Blackbird is somewhat larger than the Red-wing. The color of the male is black, with green reflections, but the outside of the feathers are often rusty and dirty looking.

The Purple Finch, or Linnet, many of you must have heard, though you may not have seen it. It is very musical and sings in April from the top of our maples.

The male has dark crimson on head, neck and throat, dusky on his back, and inclined to straw color below. His song is of many strains, and resembles much that of a canary, though not so powerful. He is one of our most musical singers.

One bird that I have not mentioned is a rare visitor, but I saw a few here last winter, and that is the Pine Grossbeak. It is a bird about as large as a robin; the male being darkish red on his back, with rosy red on his head; the female being more Quaker-like with shades of dusky red on crown and rump. They are neat and trig as to form, and when here are most likely to be found feeding on the berries of the mountain ash. I have never heard its song.

The Partridge you find only in the woods or in the orchards near the groves. The Quail lives in the fields and pastures and in the brushwood along the edge of the woods, but it sometimes drops into our city gardens. Its note of "More

wet, more wet," is clear and musical. The Mourning Dove may often be seen, in pairs, in the dusty roadways, and is a miniature copy of the wild pigeon. Its note is a mournful coo.

And now a few words concerning the birds of prey, the Ducks and the Herons, before I describe the finest of our singers. The Hawks are not musicians, unless shrill screaming can be called musical, but they are very noticeable birds and cannot well be passed without mention. You may see a hawk soaring above us in wide circles, then closing its wings, shooting down like a bullet and grasping with its talons the unfortunate bird that has come within the scope of its sharp vision. How serenely, also, does it meet the attack of the crow and the kingbird, wheeling in large and expanding spirals, ascending to the higher regions of the air, where the smaller bird cares not to follow.

The most common hawks seen here

are the Marsh Hawk, which is quite large, bluish back and whitish breast. It can often be seen flying low over fields and pastures hunting for mice and insects.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk is a smaller bird, of dark leaden color, tail crossed with black bars, and feeds on small birds and mice.

The Cooper's Hawk, a large bird, similar in color to the Sharp-shinned, feeds on birds. Its note is a loud scream

The Redtailed Hawk, often called the Hen Hawk, feeds on birds and chickens.

The Sparrow Hawk, a small bird, has the most highly colored plumage of any of our hawks. You see it quite often perched on fence posts.

The Rough-legged Hawk, quite often seen in winter, is a large bird.

Every summer those walking along the river bank, must at times see the Osprey, or Fish Hawk. It is a large hawk, twenty-two inches long, with

spread of wings more than five feet. Its neck and upper parts are dark chocolate brown, its crown, back of head and nape, pure snow white; chin and lower parts pure white, except thighs, which are dashed with brown. It commonly sits in a horizontal position, tail in line with back, and head seldom erect. It lives wholly on fish, and it will carry with its talons a fish heavier than itself. It never disturbs the smaller birds, and the small birds have been known to build their nests on the borders of the large nest of the Fish Hawk.

A pair of Eagles can occasionally be seen soaring over Mts. Tom and Holyoke, and they, with the Great-footed, or Duck Hawk, sometimes breed on the cliffs of the mountains.

We have not many water birds. The Canada, or Wild Goose, flies over us in wedge-shaped flocks in spring and autumn, but its honk is rarely heard now.

The Black Duck was formerly abundant, but is now quite rare.

The Wood, or Summer Duck, we have with us, and the drake, in his nuptial plumage, is very ornamental. It has red eyes, orange feet, glowing green crown, rich chestnut-red throat and breast, while its back is rich bronzy green, purple and black.

You may occasionally see the Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, and very rarely the Shoveler and Pintailed Ducks.

During the winter you will find in the open water on the rapids what you will mistake for large ducks. They are properly named Mergansers; called sometimes the Goosander, sometimes the Shell-drake. They have not the broad duck bill, but its bill is long and saw-toothed. They have green head and necks, their backs and wings being black and white.

You may see also the little Grebes; sometimes called Water Witches, sometimes Dippers, sometimes Hell Divers.

There are nine species of Owls that visit us. The more common ones are the Barred Owl, the Long-eared Owl, the little Screech Owl, and the Great-horned Owl.

The Barred Owl will be seen during the autumn and the winter. Its length is from eighteen to twenty inches, and its note is "hoot." It will sometimes visit the poultry yard in the daytime.

The Long-eared Owl is not so common, and is slightly smaller than the one last mentioned, and feeds on birds, mice, and squirrels.

The Screech Owl is quite common; its length but ten to eleven inches. It feeds on mice and insects, and its wailing note is rather musical.

The Great-horned Owl is the largest of our summer owls, and its note of "hoot, hoot to hoo" is familiar to those who live near large woods. It is quite a contortionist in its way. As you approach it by daylight it will twist its body into

queer shapes, snap its bill in anger, and twist its head and neck as though the neck were broken, then suddenly reverse and twist on the opposite side, so that the head is in line with the tail and facing it.

The owls less commonly seen are the Snow Owl, the Short-eared Owl, the Hawk Owl, and the Acadian Owl.

The Snow Owl is the largest and the showiest owl that visits us, but you will see it only during the cold wintry months. Its color is white with black mottlings. It does not seem to mind the glare of the brightest winter sunshine. I never heard its note.

The Hawk Owl and the Short-eared Owl are not common.

The Acadian Owl is the smallest of our owls, and but little larger than a robin. It is sometimes called the Whetsaw, for the reason that its note resembles that made by the filing of a saw.

Our Herons are the Blue, the Green,

and the Night Herons. The Blue Heron, or the Blue Crane, is the largest of the three. It is found along the shores of the river and the ponds. It feeds on fish and frogs. It wades in shallow waters, then stands motionless until some unwary fish comes within its reach, when its head moves quick, almost as the lightning flash, and the fish is speared in readiness for its dinner.

The Green Heron is much smaller than the Blue. It is commonly found among the reeds and water grasses on the edge of muddy ponds.

The Night Heron does not seem to be common here, but yet I think that some of you must have heard its hollow note of "qua" as it flies over our city about twilight or soon after. The male bird in full plumage is rather handsome, and has two long feathers projecting over the back.

There is another bird found along the shores of ponds and in swamps which

some of you may mistake for a Heron, but the proper name of which is the American Bittern, sometimes called the Stakedriver, from its note, which resembles the noise made in driving a stake in boggy ground with a big mallet. It is larger than the Green and Night Heron, and its color a greenish yellow.

If you desire to hear in perfection the grand bird choir you must arise in June before the sun. You may later in the day listen to some fine individual performers, but the grand chorus can only be heard from daybreak to sunrise.

Now we come to the finest choristers of the heavenly choir—the star performers, so to speak; most of whom are embraced in the Thrush family. Here we have the little Golden-crowned, the Brown, the Hermit, the Song, the Veery, the Robin,—all thrushes; and I may add to the list the Catbird. The Mocking bird is generally placed at the head of this musical group of songsters, but it is sel-

dom, if ever, seen here, and perhaps its song is never heard when he does stray to our neighborhood. In my own opinion, his natural song, which I have often listened to in North Carolina, does not surpass that of our Brown Thrush, and the notes of the Song Thrush and the Hermit Thrush induce in us a far deeper religious feeling than do those of the Mocker.

The little Golden-crowned Thrush is often called the Oven bird, from the character of its nest, which is usually built in a slight hollow in the earth, of dry leaves and grass, domed at top like the old-fashioned oven, the entrance being through a hole on its side. Visit the woods around Mt. Tom in late spring or early summer, and whenever you hear the notes, "I see, I see, I see," or "Preacher, preacher, preacher," with emphasis on the first syllable, and the strain repeated six or eight times louder and yet more loud, you may be quite

sure that you are listening to the Ovenbird. He often sings at high noon within the deeper woods. He is smaller than the robin, olive green in color, the crown of his head a golden brown and, like most of the thrushes, his breast is creamy white, spotted with brown.

The Brown Thrush, or the Thrasher, is the pet of the country lad. It is larger than a robin, rich, rusty red in color, breast creamy white, and spotted with black and with long red tail. It nests in low bushes and raises but one brood in a season. He delights to perch on the highest branch of a small tree and utter for hours his beautiful strain of melody, full of all imaginable variations, but all musical. He is one of the finest performers in our choir.

The Hermit Thrush visits us in the spring and autumn, but does not remain with us during the summer. He is really the leader of the choir, and his deep, mellow and flute-like notes are heard

only in or near the deep forest. Unfortunately he will not sing for us. He is sometimes called the Swamp Angel.

Now comes another beautiful songster, which we can sometimes hear in the dingle toward sunset, and his name is the Song Thrush, or Wood Thrush, and sometimes the Fife bird, from his clear whistling notes. His song has from eight to ten different strains. After each strain a pause of three or four seconds. He is often confounded by writers with the Hermit Thrush, but his notes, beautiful as they are, have not the deep, rich, sonorous quality that the Hermit alone emits. You can distinguish him from the other thrushes by the rich, tawny color of his back and by his white breast sprinkled with brownish spots.

The Wilson Thrush, or Veery, is rather small, being a little larger than the blue-bird. He could, however, at once, be taken for a thrush from his general appearance, though his breast is white

and apparently unspotted. It is not a familiar bird, and yet, I think it must often be heard on the large shade trees on Northampton street. It generally keeps in the woods near a stream, and often sings after sunset, but its notes are seldom heard after the middle of July. I think that this must be the bird that is called the Nightingale in Vermont.

Don't despise the Catbird because you so often hear it squall like a sick kitten. It is really a beautiful singer, with a strain resembling that of the thrasher, but it is not so loud nor has it as many variations. Many of you hearing him have supposed him to be the Brown Thrush.

The Warblers and the Flycatchers do not assume the leading parts in the choir, but they are, by no means, indifferent performers. Their music is of one or two strains, but is not a continued or varying song.

The rambler in the woods will surely hear the Vireos and other warblers, but he may not be able to see them, as they generally sing from thick leafy coverts. The Vireos, so named from their greenish color, that are with us all summer, are the Red-eyed and the Warbling Vireos. The Yellow-throated and the Solitary Vireos are often here, but seldom remain all the summer. The White-eyed Vireo lives in swampy ground, but is not common. The Warbling Vireo and the Red-eyed Vireo prefer the larger woods, but are sometimes to be heard in the suburbs. The Warbling Vireo is quite small, dull colored, with no very distinguishable markings. Hence he is seldom seen, though often heard. His note is "Brigadier, Brigadier, Bridget." The Red-eyed Vireo is larger than the preceding, but less seldom heard near houses. His note is, "Do you hear me? Do you see me?" Quite moderate.

A fine singer and a very showy bird is

the Rose-breasted Grossbeak. Black as to his back, with a front of rose-red. It confines itself to the woods, generally among the evergreens.

The Indigo Bunting is a small bird, bright indigo blue above with iridescent gleams, and is a pretty singer, though its notes are weak. It is smaller than our bluebird and more beautiful.

The Scarlet Tanager is also a very showy bird, and found in some localities here. I have seen them on the Northampton meadows and in the woods on the road to Westfield. It is considerably larger than the Indigo bird and more noticeable to the unobservant, for its body is of bright scarlet, while its wings and tail are black. It is a pleasant singer, but not a powerful one.

A common resident here is the Yellow Warbler, generally known as the Summer Yellow bird. Its body is of a quite bright yellow with reddish streaks, and is a pleasing songster.

A little sparkling gem of a bird is the Redstart, which you will see busily engaged in running about and under the limbs of the smaller trees. Its general color is black, but with sides of rich red chestnut color. Its song resembles that of the Summer Yellow bird, but weaker.

The Maryland Yellowthroat you will discover in the shrubbery along the swamps and brooks. It is quite small, of bright olive color, with yellow throat and breast, and with a black band running from the nostrils over the eyes. Its note is pleasing, "Which is it? Which is it? Which is it?" Resembling somewhat that of the Warbling Vireo.

The Green Warbler is a small bird with yellow olive back and crown; throat black, yellow forehead and sides of head; the under parts being white. Its song is very plaintively enunciated, "Hear me, St. Theresa."

Besides these birds I have mentioned

are several others of the smaller warblers, all with musical chirpings, but less noticeable. They help sound the grand chorus, and we cannot spare them from the choir.

The Starling, or Meadow Lark, you will see on the pasture lands and in the grass near the brooks. It is sometimes called the Marsh Quail. Its note is long, rich and plaintive, and often sounded from the ground or fence rail.

The Baltimore Oriole, called sometimes the Golden Robin, sometimes the Hang Bird, from its habit of hanging its nest from the limb of some tall elm, is very handsome. It is a constant visitor wherever the tree is large enough to enable it to hang its pouch-like nest from the slender tip of the branches. He comes to us when the cherries are in bloom and when the oaks and the maples are unfolding their leaves. Its call is musical. Its head, neck and back are black, elsewhere its color is bright

orange. Its name of Baltimore Bird was derived from its color, black and orange, being the family colors of Lord Baltimore, who founded Maryland.

The Orchard Oriole somewhat resembles the other, but its colors are not so bright, and it is less noticeable. Its note is musical.

Another very noticeable bird, when the male bird is adorned in nuptial plumage, is the Bobolink, or Skunk Blackbird, as he is sometimes termed, for the reason that the yellowish white blotch on the black back resembles somewhat the manner in which the colors are distributed over the back of the skunk. He is also called the Reedbird when he lives among the reeds of the Delaware, and the Ricebird when he is stealing rice in the Carolinas. Thousands of them are killed for food during the autumn, and its little bodies, when served for food to epicures, bring a good price. In the season when they are marketable you can, at the res-

taurants in our larger cities, always get your dish of reedbirds or ricebirds, for the bodies of the English sparrows can always be relied upon to keep up the supply; so, you see, even English sparrows have their use. In breeding times the color of the male is black, the back of its head yellowish buff, and back white with dashes of gray. The color of the female and young is yellowish brown above, brownish yellow beneath, and you would hardly believe that they held any relationship to the male as you know him. He remains here long after you believe him to be gone, for he soon loses his bright colors and takes on the plumage of the female. Our bird is showy, noisy and flippant, and sings as he flies. Cranch thus poetizes concerning him:—

“ What cadences of bubbling mirth
 Too quick for bar or rhythm !
 What ecstacies, too full to keep
 Coherent measure with them !

"Your drunken jargon through the fields,
Your bobolinkish gabble,
Your fine anacreontic glee,
Your tipsy revellers babble."

There are but three Woodpeckers that are common here: the Downy, the Hairy and the Golden-winged. They cannot be termed musical, their note being a rattle. The Golden-winged Woodpecker is often called Flicker, Highhole and Wakeup, the latter name being derived from its note, which is "Wakeup, wakeup, wakeup." This bird, unlike others of his family, is often seen upon the ground, and is a great devourer of ants, which it obtains by thrusting its long, rough and flexible tongue into the ant holes.

The Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are generally known as Sapsuckers. The Red-headed Woodpecker is seldom seen here, though it was once quite common in Western Massachusetts. It is a very showy bird, adorned with the national colors of red, white and blue.

The Kingfisher you may see and hear quite often along the shores of the pond and river. It is showy but awkward looking, its bill being very large and its neck very short. Its note is a sharp rattle.

The Whip-poor-will and the Night Hawk bear a close resemblance to each other, and by many are supposed to be the same bird, but closely examined they are quite different, and in some localities the night hawk is common where the whip-poor-will is never heard. Both lay their eggs on the ground or a bare rock, but the eggs of the whip-poor-will are white spotted with bluish brown, while those of the night hawk are pale greenish brown spotted with darker olive brown. The whip-poor-will is a twilight or night bird, but the night hawk is generally to be seen on any fine afternoon feeding upon mosquitoes, sailing round in wide circles and suddenly falling nearly to the ground, emitting a hollow boom as it

turns to rise. The song of the whip-poor-will is "whip-poor-will," oft repeated. Clark says that the note of a night hawk is similar to that of the meadow lark, but I can detect no resemblance to the sweet notes of the latter.

The Woodcock is not put among the singers, but I have heard them in a warm spring day utter a very musical love note while in the air.

Among our common birds I must not forget the Swallows, though they do not sing very musically. We have the Bank, the Barn, the Chimney and the Eaves Swallows. They are really handsome birds, with the exception of the Chimney Swallow, and their flight is very graceful.

There are many more birds that might be mentioned, but none of them are good musicians except the Wrens, the more common House Wren, which has a pleasant lively song, and the Winter Wren, which is a much finer singer. There are

warblers and flycatchers, whose chirps are rather striking. There is the beautiful little Humming bird, which we love to watch as it poises itself before the throat of some red flower, its wings moving so rapidly that they are nearly invisible. There are the Cuckoos, whose mournful note we sometimes hear from the apple trees in our orchards; the King-bird, the little Goldfinches and the handsome Chewink, or Ground Robin—but if I should describe them all I should keep you here until morning, and I fear that my paper is already too long for your patience. I will say a few words about their nests, and then close.

The Eagle nests on trees along sides of cliffs, its nest being made of large sticks and moss. The large Duck Hawk builds a similar nest on the bare rock on some inaccessible cliff. The Humming bird builds a beautiful home, generally in an apple tree, its materials being of the finest and most delicate moss, and so

covered on the outside with the green moss that it is difficult to distinguish it from a natural knot, even when the nest is pointed out to you. The Baltimore Oriole makes a long pouch-like nest of yarn and strings, which it hangs from the ends of branches, not easy to be reached by cats or snakes. The Orchard Oriole suspends its nest from the fork of a tree, and it is not a pouch, but an inverted cup. The shape of the nest of the White-eyed Vireo is that of an inverted cone generally suspended from the stem of a twining vine. The Meadow Lark's nest is a loose structure of grass and fibrous roots at base of tufts of grass or weeds. The Bluebirds and the Woodpeckers nest in a hole in a tree. The Kingfisher digs a hole into a clay bank from four to six feet deep and places its nest at the end of the tunnel. I do not counsel any boy to attempt to rob that nest when the parents are at home, for the blow of the kingfisher's beak is

quick and powerful. The Barn Swallow builds its mud nest inside the barn on the cap log under the eaves, while the Eaves Swallow builds its nest outside, under the eaves. The Cliff Swallows make holes in banks.

I will now close with a few lines from Bryant.

THE RETURN OF THE BIRDS.

"I hear from many a little throa
A warble interrupted long ;
I hear the robin's flute-like note,
The bluebird's slenderer song

"O choir of Spring, why come so soon
On leafless grass and herbless lawn ?
Warm lie the yellow beams of noon,
Yet Winter is not gone.

"For frost shall sheet the pools again,
Again the blustering East shall blow,
Whirl a white tempest through the glen
And load the pines with snow."





